

the style apex abruptly hooked or curved, with the stigmatic surface unilaterally disposed.

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OBSERVATIONS REGARDING THE OCCURRENCE
AND RELATIONSHIPS OF *RUELLIA LORENTZIANA*
(ACANTHACEAE) IN SOUTHERN FLORIDA¹

For a number of years taxonomists interested in the flora of southern Florida have been aware of a *Ruellia* not described in Small's manual of the Flora of Southeastern United States. Thus far the plant is known only as a naturalized weed on the grounds of the University of Florida Subtropical Experiment Station and immediate environs in Homestead, but it appears to be spreading aggressively into neighboring fields, particularly those disturbed by agriculture. Identification of these plants proved difficult, and transplants were grown in the experimental garden of the University of South Florida in order that individuals could be observed over a period of time. Vigorous plants yielding abundant fertile seeds were produced (fig. 1). They were compared with transplants of other species of *Ruellia* and proved to be distinctly unlike any other taxon from eastern United States, but similar to transplants of *R. occidentalis* (A. Gray) Tharp & Barkley (*R. nudiflora* Urban var. *occidentalis* Leonard) from Texas. Preliminary crossing attempts indicated that the unknown plants were intersterile with eastern United States taxa such as *R. caroliniensis* (J. F. Gmel.) Steud. and *R. succulenta* Small, but cross compatible with *R. occidentalis*.

¹Contribution No. 23 from the Botanical Laboratories, University of South Florida. Aided by grant GB-1026 from the National Science Foundation.

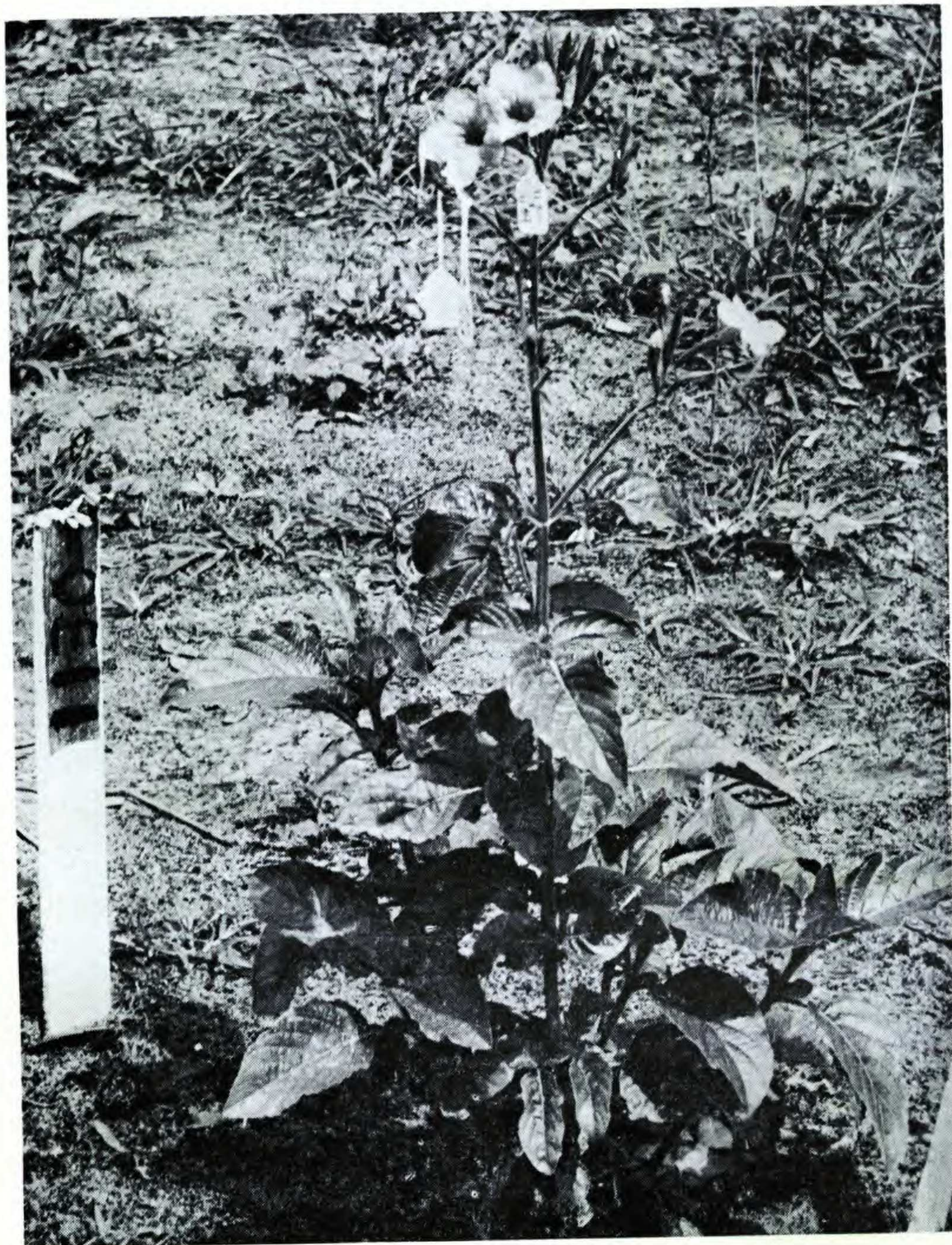


Plate 1336. Garden culture of *Ruellia lorentziana*.

The following brief description based on garden cultures may serve to characterize the plants:

Erect, simple or divergently branching near the base, up to 0.9 m. high, stems quadrangular and grooved, covered with pale cystoliths, glabrescent below to eglandular-strigose above especially at the nodes and on young leaves and branches, larger internodes 11.6-13.7 cm.

long, larger leaves oblong-ovate to slightly cordate, blades 9.8-10.2 cm. long, 5.8-6.1 cm. wide, with conspicuously darker veins, margins obscurely to irregularly serrate, petioles 2.5-2.7 cm. long; inflorescence a narrow terminal panicle, densely glandular pubescent, sepals not keeled, corolla pale blue-violet, pubescent, capsule 2.2-2.4 cm. long, glandular pubescent, stalked, with 17-18 seeds.

REPRESENTATIVE SPECIMEN: FLORIDA, DADE Co., Homestead, spreading as weed on grounds of Univ. of Florida Subtropical Experiment Station. June 8, 1962, *R. W. Long 1130* (USF).

Although this plant clearly belongs to the *R. nudiflora*-*R. tuberosa* L. complex, it is not easily assigned to any of the species or varieties given by Leonard (Jour. Wash. Acad. Sci. 17:509-520, 1927). It is referred here provisionally to the Argentine species *R. lorentziana* Griseb., but it differs in having eglandular stems, sepals not keeled, and pubescent corollas.

Lindau (*In: Die natürlichen Pflanzenfamilien* 4(3b): 274-354, 1895) places *R. lorentziana* in sect. *Dipteracanthus* along with numerous other South American taxa, but places *R. tuberosa* in sect. *Euruellia*. This illustrates the highly unsatisfactory state of our understanding of this complex group of species that includes *R. tuberosa*, *R. nudiflora*, *R. intermedia* Leonard, and *R. lorentziana*.

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